

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

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LLINOIS DOCUMENTS

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ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY

The Manuscript Collection  
of the

Illinois State Historical Library

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## THE LIBRARY'S MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

For more than seventy-five years the Illinois State Historical Library has been the official state repository for public and private research materials concerning state history. One important source of information is the Library's Manuscript Collection.

### *What Is A Manuscript Collection?*

Traditionally a manuscript collection has contained handwritten documents. In recent years this term has been widened and modified. A "collection" may include letters, diaries, ledgers, scrapbooks, speeches, campaign literature, minutes of an organization, photographs, reminiscences and related materials. A collection may be small or large, ranging from a few pieces to thousands of items. The Library's criteria for acceptance is based on the historic value for the present and future.

### *Our Current Holdings*

The more than 3,000,000 manuscripts in the Illinois State Historical Library include nearly every period of the state's history and contain the papers of fourteen Illinois governors, numerous state and federal officers, and the records of educational, business and labor groups. The collections also include diaries and letters describing frontier conditions, and personal correspondence from Illinois soldiers.

Of particular value to the historian is the Civil War collection which contains soldiers' diaries, regimental records, and letters and papers of many of the prominent politicians of the period: Richard Yates, Richard Oglesby,

John Palmer, David Davis and Lyman Trumbull. The Library also houses the second largest Lincoln collection of letters and documents in the United States.

In addition to the nineteenth century collections, the Library has acquired numerous contemporary documents. These include the papers of Governors William Stratton, Henry Horner, Otto Kerner, and Adlai Stevenson, as well as those of educational institutions, and business and labor organizations.

## *How Manuscripts Are Given To The Library*

When historically significant material is offered the Library, the donor signs a letter stating that the manuscripts are a gift to the Library and that literary rights to the collection belong to the public. An agreement is prepared at the time of transferral if limitations upon the use of the collection are advisable.

When the collection arrives at the Library, the manuscripts are accessioned and organized chronologically or by subject. The items are then inventoried. The collection is ready now to be cataloged for the convenience of the researcher. All material given to the Library is kept in fire resistant areas under controlled conditions.

## *Who Uses A Manuscript Collection?*

The Library is in continuous use by scholars, writers, students and genealogists. Academic research done from Library sources often finds publication in books and various historical journals, including the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, published by the Library. Materials from the manuscript collection are also used to supplement exhibits in the Illinois Historymobile, which is the Library's way of taking history to the people in cities and towns throughout Illinois.

Researchers may use the collections in the manuscripts section adjacent to the main

Library Reading Room. In addition to the manuscript collection, the Library contains 130,000 volumes of books and periodicals and the largest extant collection of Illinois newspapers on microfilm. Each of these supplements the historian's use of the manuscript collection. Materials may be used from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parking is available in the Old State Capitol underground garage.

## *How Will Future History Be Written?*

The Library encourages public awareness of the importance of manuscript collections, and assistance from the people is needed in the Library's energetic quest for materials. By a cooperative public effort most of Illinois' history can be preserved. The Field Services Division is available to consult with persons who have manuscripts in their possession, or know of persons who have materials which should be preserved.



*Field Service representative examines a collection before processing begins.*



Please have a Library representative visit me to discuss materials for possible inclusion in the Illinois State Historical Library manuscript collection.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone and Area Code \_\_\_\_\_

#### COMMENTS

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